

Memo

To: Montana EMSTC's
From: Kenneth L. Threet, EMS Training Coordinator
Date: 2/19/2004
Re: Current status and how changes affect you!

Good Day! This memo is in intended to update you on your current EMSTC status and changes that have occurred in the past few months and the next few months that affect you.

If you noticed, the letterhead on this memo is different. While the Montana Board of Medical Examiners has always been responsible for the licensing and training of prehospital personnel, the EMS and Injury Prevention Section of the Montana Department of Public Health personnel did the daily work. Dayle Perrin, F. Ray Ruffatto and myself primarily conducted Board activities within the EMS and Injury Prevention Section. In the past few months, the Department of Labor and Industry (where the Board of Medical Examiners is located in state government) determined they should be operating the EMT program as identified by law. So, as of January 2004, the programs and myself have been physically moved to the Department of Labor and Industry, Montana Board of Medical Examiners. This includes all activities related to the training and licensing of prehospital personnel from First Responder through Paramedic.

Currently, we are still moving files and training materials between the offices and getting things like phones and other materials coordinated. One of my initial duties, besides trying to remember go to the right building in the morning, is to implement the rule revisions that went into affect January 30, 2004.

My contact numbers and address have changed and will be listed at the end of this memo. We will also be using the Board web page to post new and current information concerning EMT training and approved protocols; this is also identified at the end of this memo. I will also use the 10-Kids system to assure communication between EMS providers, EMS services, myself and the Board.

Ok, so what's the scoop? Currently there are a number of changes already in place, as they affected anyone they were notified. Some of you may have already received information on certain items.

First: As a recognized EMSTC, your EMSTC status will remain in effect until you can attend the replacement training called "Lead Instructor". Current planning has Lead Instructor training programs available in April and May 2004 and again in the fall of 2004 as in the past. The original training programs will be offered in four locations across the state so that you will have reasonable availability to the programs. Currently, we are discussing Miles City, Billings, Great Falls and Missoula as possible locations. As this becomes firm, notification will be sent. Until you attend the new training, you will be able to continue functioning as an EMSTC in your local area, regardless of your expiration date as an EMSTC. You may continue to coordinate programs as you can today, but will not be allowed to move into the new material identified in the rule revision until your attendance at the new Lead Instructor program has been completed.

Secondly: Everyone has received a new license number. This was due to converting the EMT database from the Department of Health to the Department of Labor. In the past, as new levels were developed, we started a new numbering system and there became more than one number 1 or 30, one for each level. This could not be maintained in the database transfer and the sequential numbering of all licenses was necessary. Think of it as you would your driver's license; if you obtained a cycle endorsement, they did not issue you a new license or a new number. Everyone will receive a new card, first those re-licensing this year, followed by everyone else. In case your wondering, the issuing of the new numbers was done randomly by the computer and no methodology was utilized. Anyone can check their new numbers and their license by going to the Department of Labor and Industry web site and use the "Licensee Lookup" feature. If anyone identifies any conflicting information, please notify me and we'll have it corrected. The database conversion was not necessary seamless. Most errors are being caught with the re-licensure process and emails from individuals.

Thirdly: As everyone knows, the state will no longer be providing centralized examinations for licensure. All examinations are conducted locally under the direct supervision of the Medical Director. The Medical Director may delegate certain activities related to the examination process to the Lead Instructor, but must retain the oversight of the written examination. The "Examination Manual" is now available on the Board web site for downloading. This first edition (as I'm sure there will be revisions) will provide you the necessary information to determine **if you would like to** or **how to** conduct an examination locally. The procedures identified in the manual must be followed and the Board will conduct on-site visits to assure quality and consistency. ALS examinations are identified in the manual, but must be coordinated through this office and additional information will be forthcoming.

The new rules identify the First Responder as an EMT licensure level and require National Registration as one of the requirements. Therefore, any First Responder courses currently approved **may use** the state authorization examination as we have in the past or can test with the National Registry materials identified in the Examination Manual. But, any new courses (not approved as of today) must use the procedure contained in the Examination Manual and obtain National Registry as a requirement of their licensure. I will remind you of this in your approval letter.

The former PINK certification / recertification applications are no longer in use and will be returned if submitted. The initial licensure application for all levels can be downloaded from the Board web site.

Re-licensure has a new process and everyone re-licensing in 2004 should have already received information in the mail. Re-licensure can be accomplished on-line for EMT-Basic through EMT-Paramedic; First Responders will be able to use the on-line process next year (2005). We encourage you to use the on-line process as it helps keep overall costs down.

The state will no longer be accepting initial or re-registration fees for the National Registry. Consult the Examination Manual for the process to submit initial National Registry applications to the National Registry. Do not send National Registry applications to the state, they will be returned, delaying your registration with them.

In the event that you do want to offer an examination after your course, we are developing a web site listing for students to check the locations and contacts for approved examinations being offered across the state. You can refer your students to the web site to identify possible testing sites. If you request an examination, I will be asking you if this examination is open to others or closed to only your students. If it is closed, the web site will not identify a contact number for the exam coordinator and will identify that exam as a closed examination. The web site should be available with the next month.

Fourth: The rule revision identifies a different process to submit applications for program or course approvals. A new course application will be developed in the next few weeks and will be placed on the Board web site. The rule revision also identifies an application fee for course or program approvals: \$15.00 for courses and \$50.00 for a program approval. While the program approval process is still being developed, the course approval will require submission of the application fee from this point forward. Any course applications

submitted after receipt of this memo will require the fee. Applications received without the fee will be returned to the EMSTC. Check the web site for the newest course applications. The program approval process will begin after the first Lead Instructor programs, so that the correct information can be provided to the new Lead Instructors.

A web site listing of approved courses will be available within the next month. I will be asking you if your course is open to others or closed to only your identified students. If it is closed, the web site will not identify a contact number for the Lead Instructor and will identify that course as a closed course.

Fifth: Licensure fees have been modified. The fee structure has been changed; make sure your students check it before submitting initial applications for any level. Because the First Responder authorization has never had a fee attached and because many police and fire departments use the First Responder level; the Board has waived the First Responder initial and re-licensure fee for a two-year period to allow departments to secure budgets necessary to cover these costs. First Responder initial and re-license applications will require the state fees if submitted after December 31, 2006.

Finally, a number of other items are under development such as Medical Director training program, endorsements (at all levels) and the provision of technical assistance for Lead Instructors and Medical Directors. The Board web site has a proposed "development timeline" for your review. It is our best guess at the present time and may be modified as necessary. Refer to it for updates and planning purposes.

I wanted to get this information out to you, as I know it has been a confusing past few months. I too have had many confusing moments (days). While I'm sure this memo did not provide you everything you may have wanted to know, the Lead Instructor Training Program will. I suggest that if you are planning to remain an EMSTC and take advantage of the flexibility contained in the new rules, you should plan on attending the Lead Instructor program.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. Additional information will follow as it becomes available.

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